

Thousands of Presley Faithful Make Pilgrimage to Tomb Site

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (UPI) — Thousands of somber Elvis Presley fans, intent on paying their respects even though belatedly, filed quiet-

ly past his tomb Saturday in a pilgrimage drawn from the corners of America.

Some wept openly at the death of their rock 'n' roll

idol, who died Tuesday of a heart attack at the age of 42.

Although his funeral and entombment took place Thursday, there was a new outpouring of fans Saturday, and by midday police estimated 4,000 had filed past the gray marble mausoleum where his copper coffin rests.

The sea of funeral flowers that earlier had surrounded the mausoleum were gone — given away to the thousands of fans who were finally allowed inside Forest Hill Cemetery for the first time Friday. Some in the weekend crowd were content to take away leaves from nearby oaks and firs as keepsakes.

Smaller lines of fans also gathered at Graceland, Presley's 18-room mansion near the cemetery, and were permitted inside the usually locked gates to go a few yards up a hill to photograph the home.

Sonja Rogers, 32, drove all night from Champaign, Ill., with her husband and child to see Presley's burial place. A grocery checker, she bought a \$10.60 potted pink azalea when she arrived but guards at the mausoleum would not let her past the ropes to place the plant near the singer's crypt.

"Mommy, I want to go in to see Elvis," her 4-year-old son, Shawn, pleaded.

"They won't let you in," she said.

Many of the fans complained they had driven long distances, only to be held back by a thin yellow rope encircling the mausoleum.

Fans will eventually be allowed inside to see the marble slab sealing Presley's crypt but the singer's family has asked that the building be locked until security arrangements can be worked out.

Simple Rites Planned

MONROE, La. (UPI) — A clergyman said Saturday he planned a simple funeral service for Alice Hovartar, an orphaned teen-ager who was struck and killed by a car while standing vigil outside the Memphis home of singer Elvis Presley.

"It will be a normal funeral. We're not going to make a circus or a carnival out of this," said the Rev. Wade East, superintendent of the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home, where Miss Hovartar spent her childhood.

East will preside at the services.

Miss Hovartar and Juanita Johnson, both 19, were struck and killed by a car outside the Presley mansion in Memphis, Tenn., Thursday.

Separate funeral services for Miss Johnson were scheduled Saturday.

The driver accused of killing the two girls and injuring a third has been jailed without bond in Memphis.

A judge Friday revoked bonds totaling \$20,000 and ordered authorities to keep Treatise Wheeler, 18, in custody until further notice. The judge acted after Wheeler's mother said she knew the youth was troubled, but she did not know why.

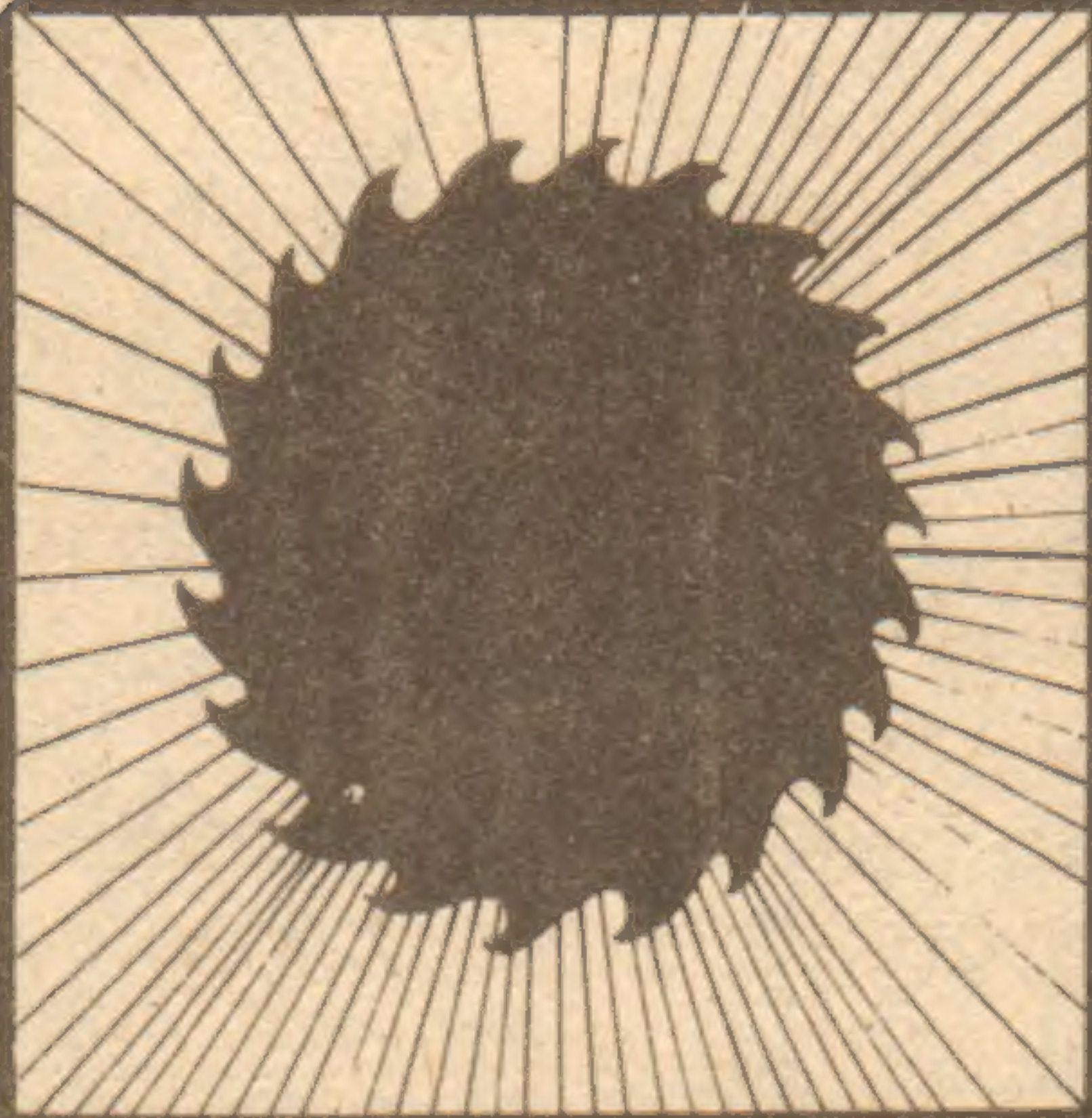


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